

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 408.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1861.

PRICE 1½d.

MELIBOEUS ON THE CANAL.

BEFORE that shower came on which interrupted the devotional exercises in Hyde Park, Meliboeus had made up his mind that he would see for himself how the Londoners spent their Sundays, but being balked of his intention for that time, he could not again be persuaded to undertake the enterprise. A great deal of interesting matter is thus doubtless lost for ever to the intelligent public, many shrewd observations, and much excellent wit. It is sad to reflect from how slight a cause (namely, the shower) the greatest misfortunes (such as the silence of Meliboeus) may spring; and it forms a convincing proof, if one were needed, of the general incompleteness and unsatisfactory character of mundane things. Still—although it is always well to bring in a moral reflection—I do not myself think that the shower had anything to do with it. Meliboeus assured me with much earnestness that his 'views' had undergone a great change during the week, and that he now considered it would be wrong in him, even in his character of public instructor, to join any party of pleasure whatever upon a Sunday. In vain I protested that in a crowded steam-boat, upon a broiling day, there could be no pleasure, but its contrary; that in Kew Gardens—in which, says a board at the gate, 'as they are intended for Instruction and Recreation, smoking, idle sports, and play are forbidden'—he would be wretched without his cigar; that in Windsor Park his feelings would be outraged by such snobbish notices as the following: 'Gentlemen are requested, and servants are directed, not to ride on the turf;' and that, in short, he would not enjoy himself upon any of these suburban excursions at all. None of these considerations moved the virtuous Meliboeus in the least from his planted purpose. And here again, although I have thought it right to portray the highest principles as manifested in my admirable friend, I must be allowed to mention that I do not believe that it was these which in reality actuated him, notwithstanding that they supplied him with arguments. No. I am strongly convinced that he was deterred from Sunday excursions solely through the multitude of recent railway accidents. Otherwise, why did not his 'whole moral nature revolt,' as in other cases, from a Sunday excursion on the canal? It revolted from Brighton, it revolted from Kew, it revolted from all places connected with the metropolis by a line of rails, but it did not revolt from Paradise Gardens, Edenbower, which are attained only by the inexpedient but comparatively secure means of a pleasure-barge.

Meliboeus himself pointed out the promised trip in a penny newspaper, and asked me what I thought of it.

'The safest excursion out of London,' said I, quoting a well-known advertisement, 'without tunnels, and without overcrowding.'

If ever I saw a man colour in all my life, Meliboeus did it, nor do I believe that Mrs M. herself wore a more decided blush upon her marriage-day.

'What do *I* care about tunnels?' exclaimed he. 'What do you mean? An excursion upon a canal seems to me one of the most harmless as well as the most healthful that respectable persons can indulge in. The distance, too, is so inconsiderable, that after morning-service is over—'

'Meliboeus,' interrupted I, 'do you seriously contemplate this expedition? You, whose whole moral nature has revolted against so many propositions? Even I, who have lived in town these twenty years, have never yet been in a pleasure-barge (and certainly in no other barge) even on a week-day, and far less upon a Sunday.'

I am much mistaken if the muttered reply of Meliboeus was 'the more something you,' but the next moment his countenance reassumed its accustomed benignity. He had been temporarily ruffled—as who would not have been whose detection in hypocrisy had been so complete, and, I must confess, so unsparing—but now he was only amused at his own irritation.

'You are beyond all question the most forgiving and genial old humbug that ever imposed upon humanity,' cried I approvingly; 'but where is Edenbower, my friend, and what Canal is it that goes there?'

'I know nothing of that,' returned he; 'but I know the bridge from which the boat starts; and the chief officer of the craft, who had a gold band round his cap, himself informed me that the time of departure was two punctual, but that for persons of quality he did not mind making it two-fifteen—which I think would suit us very well. Impressed by his gorgeous appearance, and, above all, by his affable demeanour, so rarely found associated with splendid habiliments, I discussed the canal question with him at considerable length. He protests that the motion of his barge—although some barges are very different, and especially a certain red barge belonging to an opposition company which "turns and dips like a porpoise"—is the easiest of all motions, not excepting that of a bird of the air. The scenery on both banks he describes as superior to that of the far-famed but much overrated Rhine. The machine is drawn by a pair of horses, as near to Arabians as their aptitude for purposes of draught will admit. Above all, the company is select, and he laid particular stress upon the fact that we should find no Roughs on board. At first, I

understood him to mean a species of pigeon; but he explained that the early barges (and especially the red barge) were filled with persons of the most depraved yet resolute character, whereas his own was patronised mainly by the aristocracy. An aristocrat would sometimes hire the entire vessel, so that himself and friends should be enabled to keep themselves to themselves. He had taken down but last week a hidalgo of this description, who had, however (he could not but suspect), made money by the transaction, since he had procured the conveyance for three guineas, and brought along with him more than two hundred passengers—which certainly seems an unusually long visiting list. You and I, my friend, can secure this splendid vessel for the same money for ourselves, or we can go down to Paradise Gardens, Edenbower, and back for one shilling sterling, which also includes bread and butter and tea.'

'By all means, my dear Melibœus, let us go. Such transcendent economy will go far to efface the memory of that dinner at the *Aboukir*. The excursion will positively be cheaper than stopping at home.'

On the next Sunday afternoon, we sought the bridge from which this gondola started. It was a vessel exactly resembling the Ark of our childhood, with the exception of the roof, which was flat, for the convenience of outside passengers. The interior was divided in the middle by a little door, which separated, or was supposed to separate, the upper ten thousand (or as many of them as could be admitted) from the lower, although all paid the same very reasonable passage-money. The uncovered prow and stern projected far enough to accommodate half-a-dozen persons each, and in the former we took up our quarters. Instead, however, of the vast crowds we had anticipated, there were not above fifty persons in all, and those of the most respectable and uninteresting character—working tailors, shoemakers, and the like, with their wives and daughters. The chief officer, who at once recognised Melibœus, and took us both under his protection, explained that the paucity of passengers was owing to the absence of the Roughs, who had already preceded us by some hours.

'You now goes down all nice and gentlemanlike, you see, just as though you were in your own carriage, without any of that riff-raff and revelling as goes on in the red barge.'

There was certainly nothing that approached to revelling on board of the stately *Swan of Edgar*, as our boat was designated: a moderate popping of corks would indeed have relieved our proceedings very agreeably. It might have been the barge with Elaine's dead body on board, such a solemn silence held our company. It was like sitting in a water omnibus. The women sucked the handles of their umbrellas, and the men as many of the joints of a fishing-rod as they could get in their mouths. The joints were not, of course, put together, but each man carried a bundle of them in his hand like fuses. Melibœus and myself felt quite uncomfortable because we had no fishing-rods. Even the Roughs, we were informed, did not appear upon the canal without their fishing-rods; although it was darkly added by the chief officer, that the lower joints were loaded with lead, and not unfrequently had a large iron spike in them. All the Roughs that we saw, however, were lying down at full length upon barges of their own, with picturesque scarlet caps on, and short pipes in their mouths: the female Rough (or Reeve, if we may be permitted to call her so), who was also provided with tobacco, in all cases steered, and did the whole work of the floating-house, with the exception of swearing at the people who got in the way of the rope, which pleasing duty was performed with much gusto by her liege lord; and as the towing-path was very crowded, this occurred about three times in every minute. Business—by which I mean the conveyance of coke and coal, and timber and stone—was so far

from suspended, that I suppose the laws against Sunday-trading do not operate upon a canal at all. Above these cargoes sprawled one or more juvenile Roughs, in costumes admirably adapted for causing the least inconvenience to their friends in case they should fall overboard: and in their company was always to be found a terrible dog of the breed which is associated with the memory of the late Mr William Sykes.

'If anything does detract from the charm of our position,' observed Melibœus, when we had been some three-quarters of an hour on board without the *Swan of Edgar*'s evincing the least symptom of departure, 'it is the proximity of these passing dogs. I felt the hot breath of that last brute distinctly upon my left whisker, and he murmured something hoarsely into my very ear.'

'They'd never hurt a fly, bless you,' remarked the chief officer, who always listened to our conversation, and joined in it whenever he had a mind to do so.

'That is not the question, my good man,' returned Melibœus; 'they might not hurt a fly, and yet they might bite my ear off.'

'Not unless you moved, sir,' contended the chief officer, 'or did summat as was unexpected like. At a word—ay, or a wink—from his master, he'd cranch you'ed just as though it were a chicken-bone; but in a general way he minds his own business, and sits quiet—thinking perhaps of his matches past and future—as quiet as a lamb.'

'His matches!' exclaimed Melibœus, moving to the other side of the boat, which was next the towing-path. 'Do you mean to say, then, that these are fighting dogs?'

'That's just about what they are, sir; and when they once gets hold, they never lets go: that's where it is that it's so unpleasant if they catches one up by accident; you may cut 'em into mince-meat first. But you won't be troubled with any more of 'em, gents, for here are our horses, and you may be sure that there ain't a team upon this here path as can overtake them.'

The two Arabians did not at least discredit their lineage by being too fat and bulky. When we were once off, and the rope began to tell upon them sideways, I thought it must have infallibly dragged them both into the water. 'You see, gents,' observed the chief officer admiringly, 'it's no use having an inferior sort of cattle (such as is used in the red barge) for this here work. Why, to give a low price, and then to lose a horse in a week or ten days, where's the economy of that? What tandim as ever you drove, now, goes faster than us?'

Putting aside any base comparisons, we were certainly going a very good pace, and that with a very easy motion; but this rapidity engendered much confusion upon the towing-path, on which many hundreds of people were fishing or promenading, all of whom had to get out of the way of our inexorable rope. The screaming at these unfortunates was continuous, and carried on by four voices—the boy on the leading Arabian, the steersman of the *Swan of Edgar*, the chief officer our friend, and an individual called Jack, who sat astride upon a little bowsprit close to Melibœus and me, who, like some priest of Baal, was paid expressly to anathematise the people who impeded us; and I am bound to say that he earned his money. Every now and then, this rope of ours would break with a great report, and spring about in all directions, to the excessive consternation of everybody; but the 'way' on the vessel was so great that we never stopped upon that account, and continuity, by means of a knot, was resumed as satisfactorily as before, except that of course we drew gradually nearer to the Arabians. Melibœus calculated that after this fashion we were going at least fourteen knots an hour.

Upon one occasion, while stopping for repair, we

stepped out upon the towing-path, and walked on for a little way in advance of the Ark. Among the fishers, we came upon a small boy, with an evil face, fishing with an enormous hook—such as is used in butchers' shops—without any bait upon it.

'My good boy,' exclaimed Melibeus, 'what fish can you possibly expect to catch with such a singular contrivance?'

'I ain't a-fishing for fish,' returned the youth malevolently; 'I'm a-fishing for bodies.'

We were too overwhelmed by this intelligence to shape any further inquiry upon the instant, but the lad resumed of his own accord.

'I pulled an old ooman out here—me and Bob Bradawl—only yesterday fortnight.'

'Gracious goodness!' exclaimed Melibeus, 'do you mean to say she was dead?'

'Yes, she were—dead,' returned the small boy scornfully. 'There was a young un drownded under that 'ere bridge only last night; its 'im as I'm a-fishing for.'

Melibeus and I hastened into our Ark again—taking great care not to slip—and imparted what we had heard to the chief officer.

'Very like,' said he—'very like; this 'ere canal is a favourite spot for parties wishing to commit suicide.'

'Parties!' cried Melibeus; 'you don't mean to say that they make up parties to drown themselves?'

'No, no, sir—not quite that; one down, another come on, bless you, that's all. The government has put officers upon the bank expressly to put a stop to it. They was afraid, I believe, that it would come in time to interfere with the navigation. Dead dogs is bad enough—there's one, you see, a-bobbing about, and there's another just a-rising—they rises after a very little—and the boys delights in nothing so much for to shy stones at. Then, again, it's the same thing with bathing: respectable females such as ounr—' and the chief officer waved his protecting arm over the Ark and its inhabitants—'will not come down along with us if there's bathing. It is not to be expected that they should; so bathing is put a stop to.'

We were now getting clear of the suburbs, and really had on either side a very pretty prospect, while the foreground was still pleasantly diversified by wandering Swains with their Beloved Objects, with the disciples of the Gentle Art, and with teams of horses attached to the various up-barges, the ropes of which, as we met them, had to be passed under our keel in an ingenious but slightly hazardous manner—an operation which never failed to evoke Jack's bitterest eloquence. All of a sudden, as we came to a certain bend in the canal, a terrible cry arose. The boy on the leading Arabian had telegraphed some alarming intelligence. 'Ladies, ladies!' exclaimed the chief officer franticly, 'Look out! he meant to say: 'Hide your eyes!', 'and shut the door; there are persons bathing!'

It is impossible to describe the tumult that took place within the Ark upon the receipt of this awful news. Jack's language—although excellent in intention, and having for its subject the enormity of the offence committed—became of such a character that I was quite relieved to see him leap on shore, horse-whip in hand, and followed by the chief officer armed with a similar weapon. Nor was the panic less complete among those who had caused it than with ourselves. The forty or fifty young gentlemen, who, with little or no drapery, had been disporting upon the bank or in the water, no sooner caught sight of our advancing vessel than they broke and fled over the surrounding country. I beheld with my own eye two of these wretched youths endeavouring to surmount a quickset hedge, in which enterprise, whatsoever damage they received, I am confident that they did not tear their clothes. I saw others taking to their heels along the towing-path, and some even plunging headlong in the flood, and

swimming over to the other side, where they remained decently immersed in water. By these means, all escaped from their pursuers; but the whole of their baggage—their boots, their unmentionables, their all—fell into the hands of the enemy. The chief officer and Jack remorselessly gathered up their garments, and brought them back with them into the Ark.

'We will give them a run,' exclaimed the chief officer, with virtuous indignation; 'we will teach them to outrage the sense of propriety, and break the by-laws of the canal company.'

'That you will give them a run,' observed Melibeus gravely, 'I have no doubt;' and, indeed, about a dozen of them were already pursuing us at full speed, in the same costume in which the savages pursued Friday upon his first introduction to Robinson Crusoe; 'but you will scarcely improve their sense of propriety. Why, this is far worse, my good man, than letting them remain in the water.'

After a discussion of some minutes, during which the poor shivering wretches besought our pity with clasped hands and penitential gestures, it was agreed that Melibeus spoke with reason; and the clothes were cast forth upon the bank, to be fought for by the *sans-culottes* mob.

It was about this time that the chief officer began to decry Edenbower and the Paradise Gardens. 'They are extensive,' said he, 'but they are very far from being select; and besides, you'll spend arf the day in gitlin to them. Now there's the *Minnows*—where we shall be in less than no time—now that is a much nicer place, with every conveniency. Donkey-racing, pole-swarming, wrestling, and dancing on a real elastic floor. Then there's no Roughs at the *Minnows*, bless you.'

'And no red barges,' added Melibeus slyly.

'No sir; no red barges, nor revellings, nor such like. Now you take my advice, gents, and git out at the *Minnows*. I am not going further than them myself to-day.'

The *Minnows* consisted, as far as we could see upon our arrival, of a tent, three wooden tables, a landing-stair, and several trees, among which stood a diminutive public-house. It did not look a very promising place to spend an afternoon in, and when we had landed, and the barge had gone on without us, we ventured to hint as much.

'I suppose,' observed Melibeus to the chief officer, 'that the fun has not begun yet: the donkey-races and the pole-swarming?'

'O no, sir, there's nothing of that till to-morrow, sir: St Monday is the day for the *Minnows*. Of course, there is no sort of revellings in a respectable house like this upon a Sunday.'

'And do you mean to tell us that there is nothing to be done at this miserable spot whatever, chief officer?'

'Well, sir,' returned the man, with a grin, 'I ain't no chief officer now. You see my master he keeps this here Inn, and has a share in the pleasure-boats on the canal as well; so of course all people as I can get to land here, why I does. But don't take it so much to heart, gents; look at them three beautiful open fields; they're all my master's, and you may go just where you like about them: he's spent a power of money upon them three fields: that's where the donkey-racing will be to-morrow; anybody may bring a donkey as likes, you know; its hopes to Hall Hengland: and even to-day, why there's a swing, you see, and one of you gents can take it in turn with the other—turn and turn about, as we say—and everything is to be ad up at the Inn.'

'When can we get away, man?' cried Melibeus. 'When does that barge come up again to take us home?'

'Well, gents; the red barge' —

'Any barge, any barge,' interrupted Melibeus impatiently.

'Well, gents, the *first* barge will be ere about eight o'clock.'

Melibokus and I fell into one another's arms in an agony of despair, and the next time we saw that false chief officer he wore no gold band at all, but carried the napkin of servitude on his wrist—a waiter confessed.

No situation, indeed, except some extreme case of shipwreck, could be more desolate and unpromising than ours. About four other persons had disembarked at the *Minnows* at the same time, and collecting themselves together at the corner of one of the three fields, where a ditch emptied itself into the canal, had already commenced fishing. One of these had a red herring in his pocket, which he tied on to the hooks of the others when they were not looking, and this venerable joke he absolutely repeated *four* times! Beside the red herring, they caught nothing whatever; and although they frequently put a fresh bait on, it is my opinion that they never had a bite. There were some cows in the field, which we drove about for a little while, until reprimanded by the innkeeper for so doing, and we were obliged to purchase some execrable bitter beer in order to pacify his irritation. I gave Melibokus one or two swings, but since they made him feel rather sick, I did not trouble him to perform the same kind office for me; and then our list of amusements was exhausted.

'Why,' cried I, 'did you bring us down to this execrable place?'

'It was *you*,' retorted he, 'who insisted upon getting out here; you know it was. I wanted, of all things, to go down to Edenbower.'

The wicked waiter presently rang a bell, to let us know that the gratuitous tea and bread and butter was about to be served in the great tent. I shall never forget the hideous solemnity of that meal. I had never considered Tea to be a cheerful repast, but I did not know to what a depth of melancholy it was capable of sinking. The four anglers and our two selves occupied a table that was capable of accommodating seventy persons. After a little, it came on to rain, and the wet began to drip disconsolately through the canvas upon the elastic spring-boards. The scene of wretchedness may then be said to have been complete and unrelieved.

'This,' whispered Melibokus solemnly, 'this is what comes, my friend, of patronising pleasure-excursions upon a Sunday.'

I could only nod my head in melancholy adhesion.

'Will the barge be punctual, chief—waiter?' inquired Melibokus sorrowfully. Three hours of the *Minnows* had completely bent my poor friend's spirit, and he was very meek.

'Yessir; punctual as clock-work, as far as *time* goes. Our barges are always ready to start to the minute—not like them red ones: but they never *do* start, you see, on account of the passengers. Some of them is invariably behind, and has to be waited for. Our barges never thinks of starting without its compliments.'

'Indeed,' said Melibokus, 'that is very proper. You mean to say, then, that if my friend and I were missing, for instance, you would delay until we were searched for and found.'

Melibokus nudged my foot with his, and the sleeping fire of vengeance glowed within me as I began to understand his design.

'Certinny, sir; we shouldn't dream of starting without you, if it was ever so. Yessir, coming sir; and off he went to purvey two pennyworth of peppermint waters to an angler who had got wet in his feet.'

Melibokus and I sauntered out into these hated meadows that had been purchased by the proprietor of the *Minnows*: we tried to look as much as possible like people who were going to spend the evening in

those Elysian fields. Then we clambered over a gap in the hedge, and across a lane, and reached the towing-path by a circuitous route. We had escaped, and unperceived. The distance to town was considerable, and the rain continued to fall with resolution, but anything was preferable to remaining at the *Minnows*. Better to be chased with nothing on by infuriated chief officers; better, far better, to be hitched up by the evil-faced boy with the big fishing-hook, than to longer undergo that fate which we had just eluded.

At eight precisely we reached the borders of the metropolis, at the very hour, as we were delighted to reflect, that the lying waiter and his myrmidons were beginning their fruitless search for us, in the tent and in the fields, in the inn and by the water-side, at the refreshment-tables and in the *Swing*.

'I have been,' quoth Melibokus, as we sat down to supper, 'on board a floating-light ship in a sea-fog for hours; and I once spent a wet day at the Trossachs in the month of January, but I protest that both were scenes of maddest excitement compared with the *Minnows* and its company.'

'Yes,' replied I, 'it would have been better to have gone with the Roughs in the red barge. Suppose we try that to-morrow—what do you say?'

Melibokus returned a look of stern determination such as I did not believe his countenance to have been capable of. 'The great Lord Nelson,' returned he, 'was, I believe, conveyed to his last home by means of a barge. My executors may possibly—though not probably—adopt such an unusual method of transit for my remains; but while I live, my friend—while I live—you will never catch me in any such machine, or upon a canal again.'

B E D S.

It was a happy hit on the part of the Reverend Lawrence Sterne when he made his good old campaigner 'bless the man that first invented sleep.' There is a peculiar quaintness in the idea that sleep was of human invention, a device for increasing the comforts and recruiting the strength of the great family of Adam. Ideas nearly as extravagant have prevailed in bygone times; the plough, the alphabet, and so forth, were all gratefully attributed to the single effort of some mythical discoverer; Bacchus had his triumph for the fermentation of the grape-juice; and what Prometheus was to the Greeks, Turf-Einar was to the Orkneymen. But beds, at any rate, were not spontaneous productions. Successive generations must have tossed and tumbled through centuries of comparative discomfort, before our present sleeping-machines budded into being. The bed, in some form or other, appears to be almost a necessity of animal existence. It is by no means a monopoly of those conceited bipeds who are just now so perturbed at the reputed cousinship of the gorilla. All birds have beds, often so daintily lined with velvet moss, with woven feathers, with yielding down, as to convey an impression of extreme luxury. Many insects have beds, artfully constructed of ligneous fibres, of a fragment of leaf, of a blade of grass, selected by an unerring instinct. The wild rabbit makes a soft couch of withered leaves and her own fur, far down in the dark tortuous burrow, and out of that nest peer forth the round black eyes of her large and interesting family, as they take their first view of the subterranean rabbit-world. The deer, when they couch on the lee-side of some hollow hill, love to rake together all available dead leaves and stalks of fern, wherewith to screen their russet hides from cold and rain. But men, in lands the most remote and dissimilar, have found the need of some regular accommodation for the slumberer, and have done their best to provide it.

In its earliest shape, the bed was no doubt a most simple affair. The hunter naturally stretched his tired

limbs on the spoils of the chase, and drew another skin over him for a coverlet. The northern hero would roll himself in his furs, in the shaggy coat of the bear that his prowess had laid low; the Scythian had sheep-skins enough; and the painted Camanche could sleep in his buffalo-robe, precisely as his descendants do at present. But there is a wide interval between this impromptu covering and a genuine bed, and for the latter we must look eastward. Early history shews us the bed as an Oriental institution. There were beds among the star-worshippers of Babel, and the strange polytheists of hoary Egypt. Nor, so far as we know, was there the slightest difference between the couch of Pharaoh and that of Solomon; change is hateful to the Asiatic mind. This bed, the bed constantly alluded to in the Bible, exists to the present hour. We meet with it in the selamlik of a Turkish mansion, in the wooden house of a Syrian Christian, in the tent of a rich sheik, always virtually the same. It is but a long cushion, that is laid sometimes on a wooden divan, sometimes on a crazy framework of timber or cane, and there are pillows, and a quilted counterpane, to which a sheet is occasionally stitched. But this is rarely the case, because Easterns do not undress to sleep; they only undress for the bath. Usually, the divan runs round the walls of a large octagonal apartment; the slaves hastily adjust the cushions and quilts, the male members of the family untwist their turbans, kick off their slippers, and sleep as best they may. At dawn, the rugs are folded up, the pillows swept off to reconnoitre cupboards, and the bedroom becomes a reception-chamber, banquet-hall, and sitting-room. Of course, such a couch is light and portable. The palsied man was, as we all remember, commanded to 'take up his bed and walk.' The former injunction appeared in itself to imply a miraculous exertion of strength to thousands of European congregations, whereas its execution was strictly in accordance with custom. Any adult with the free use of his limbs can carry an Oriental bed, and the healed man was simply once more on a par with his healthy neighbours.

The Greeks had beds in Homer's time, but in all likelihood they were imitated from those of the Western Asiatics, if not from the Egyptian colonists to whom Hellas owed so much. The Grecian bed and the Roman bed, even during the palmiest ages of the classic period, must have been inferior in comfort to our own. The sleeping chambers, whether in an Athenian house or a Roman villa, were very small and airless, mere cells, in fact; and the beds were for the most part small too. They were sometimes truckle-beds, sometimes sofas of considerable splendour. We read of ivory couches, of bedsteads inlaid with gold and amber, and rare Indian woods, of down pillows, and mattresses stuffed with soft plumage; of purple coverlets, and of Sybarites who wept if a rose-leaf were ruffled as they reposed on a pile of fragrant petals. And yet, by the aid of the spade and mattock, we can see the classic chambers for ourselves as they stand, even now, beneath the turnip-fields of Shropshire. We can go down underneath the lava-crust, or through the stratum of volcanic ashes, and Diomedë's house and Sallust's villa will admit our intrusive steps; and we think to ourselves that, in the matter of sleeping-apartments, many a convict in a model prison is now better lodged than were the masters of the world. But, indeed, the Romans took their siesta, like most natives of the south. The sofa—the 'day-bed' that Shakspeare talks of—was dearly valued by them: they slept much during daylight—the patrician in his own superb halls, fanned by watchful slaves; the plebeian, at the even more sumptuous baths of Domitian or Caracalla. And there are few signs, in the writings of poets and historians, that the bed was esteemed according to its deserts.

It was different with our sturdy forefathers. The Goth was not a mere destroyer, like the pitiless and

purblind Tartar. He robbed the Roman; but he imitated all products of the ancient civilisation which appeared to his robust, if rather coarse, intellect as worthy of preservation. Among these was the bed. Away with the bearskin now; away with the furs of the wild-cat and the hide of the horse. The Teuton bore the bed to his forest-home, far off in the pine-clad north, and he improved upon it. The bed was no longer a small construction—costly, if it belonged to a tyrant or a courtier, mean and neglected, if it were the chattel of a mere citizen: it became the cynosure of the Scandinavian races. It was now a large and substantial fabric, with timbers solid enough for the framework of a ship; the softest plumage derived from the wild-fowl of the fens, goose-feathers, swans' feathers, the down of the eider-duck, were collected to furnish it forth; and the richest stuffs that a warrior's right arm could win from the south were sought to deck it becomingly. For this novel institution, the spinning-wheel whirled busily in thousands of thatched huts, and a wonderful quantity of coarse strong linen was produced, and bleached in dew and moonbeam. It is no exaggeration to say, that in medieval England, Scandinavia, and that vast region where the Low-German language prevailed, to say nothing of France north of the Loire, beds were by far the most important article of property. Our ancestors had no fashionable upholsterers to tempt them with beehive chairs and lounging seats. Even an oaken chair, with a straight educational back to it, rigid and hard as a poker, was only to be found at the manor-house, or in my lord the abbot's parlour. A few settles, a half dozen of three-legged stools, possibly covered with stuffed leather, and a bench or two, with heavy tables, and a canopy of dais, made up the inventory of a comfortable apartment. There were no looking-glasses, except, perhaps, some little round mirror from Venice, bought at a high price from the travelling Lombard. But the beds were often very imposing structures, with lavender-scented sheets, damask curtains, counterpanes of wadded silk or scarlet cloth, down pillows, and polished oaken pillars, whose smooth strength seemed to defy time.

They did defy time. A bed was no ephemeral affair; it went down from generation to generation, the pride and palladium of a family. Daughters were provided for in life by the free gift of a bed, by way of dowry; men of undoubted rank and good position gravely dictated their wills thus: 'Item, to my dearly beloved daughter Dorothy, I give and bequeath six spoons, two marks in money, forty bushels of wheat, and the *blue bed*, with all napery, pillows, quilts, &c.' Then another bed will be mentioned as 'the green bed that standeth in the yellow chamber'; and the 'whyte bed' will go to a younger son, and be esteemed as a valuable legacy. These beds were very large and cumbersome, though none, perhaps, ever equalled the Great Bed of Ware, which, hundreds of years ago, was reckoned as a remarkable curiosity of England. But the Sanitary Commissioners would have disapproved of at least one result of this high respect for beds of immemorial antiquity. Not only was the bedstead retained for a long time in use, but the imprisoned goose-feathers had to sustain the weight of successive proprietors for a longer period than was altogether wholesome. One reason among many for the prevalence of plague, pest, and epidemic, was presumed to be the mistaken reverence with which masses of frouzy bedding were preserved from age to age. But it must not be supposed that these great fabrics were universal; on the contrary, there was a much more marked distinction between rich and poor in this respect than now exists. Now a days, the Hon. Alfred Trumpington, or my Lord Frederick Carfax, very likely sleeps in a little brass bed no finer or bigger than that which served the purpose of the

late Duke of Wellington; and Jeames, who obeys the behests of the Hon. Alfred, or John Thomas, who wears the Carfax livery, has a little brass bed too. But a hundred years ago, the gentleman would have slept in a huge machine as pompous as the chariot in which the Good Fairy 'comes on' in a pantomime; brocade would have dangled around him, lace would have fringed his pillows of down, ghastly ostrich feathers would have nodded on the bedposts, and on the tester would have been painted the most highly tinted Cupids and Venuses that ever smirked through golden clouds. Down pillows! how honest Trumpton, who likes a bolster as hard as the sofa-squab at a Brighton lodging-house, would swear at such ampering luxuries! Painted mythology! Carfax would give it a coat of tar, if not of feathers, and blot it out of sight for ever. We are in some things more manly than our great-grandfathers.

I shall not indulge the reader with a peep at the den in which repose Jeames and John Thomas, a century or so since. It was not of an inviting character, not airy, not savoury, not wholesome; servants were expected to put up with scanty accommodation then; they were packed like the Greek slaves of the proconsul of Sicily. Their beds may have been softer than in the Plantagenet days, when a rough log with the bark on, draped in a sheet of brown homespun, formed the pillow of churl and hind, and sometimes of the yeoman as well. But they were wretched pallets, and each of these indifferent couches, in the case of servants at least, had to be shared by two or three occupants. The box-bed, common in the Scottish Highlands, and which is constantly met with in Iceland, Brittany, and elsewhere, shews some originality of conception. An idea of snugness clings to it, and most likely the herths which honeycomb the sides of a steam-packet were suggested by the box-bed. But box-beds are opposed to all sound rules of hygiene; they act as reservoirs for foul air and miasma, and the infection of fever and symptomatic disorders; and all enlightened proprietors, from her Majesty downwards, are waging against them a war of extermination. The Arabs introduced into Spain a bed of peculiar character, well adapted for camp use; this consisted of four strong pillars, with iron-tipped and sharpened ends, which could be thrust into the ground with trifling effort, and an oblong piece of leather or cloth, which was hooked to these pillars, and stretched as tight as the canvas of a drum. A saddle or valise supplied the pillow, a cloak the counterpane, and what could a soldier want more? It was a desire to escape from the dangerous damps of the earth which first caused the invention of the 'tent-bed' in brass or iron. Metal, it was discovered, was lighter, more durable and cleanly, and better fitted for the rough work of campaigning, than wood of equal strength. But to supply soldiers with a raised bedstead in camp and bivouac is a philanthropic prudence that must be reserved for some Secretary at War in the far future.

The hammock is an American invention. Not that Brother Jonathan has any right to insert its discovery in the catalogue of the Washington Patent Office; it was found out neither by Old England nor New, but by the copper-skinned aborigines of Spanish America. Native hammocks were made sometimes of cotton, sometimes of plaited grass; they were suspended from the boughs of a tall tree, by ropes of the same material, and they served the Indians alike for bed and chair. The Catholic conquerors were not slow to perceive the merits of such a device in a hot and unhealthy country, and to appreciate the luxury of swinging in a flexible and roomy couch, at a height which insured the enjoyment of every puff of cool air, and which guarded the slumberer, at least in a measure, from snakes, insects, and night-dews. It was not long before the hammock was adopted in the sea-service, where a bed which yielded to every wayward motion of the

vessel, and which could be rolled up and stowed away during the daytime, proved an invaluable addition to the sailor's comforts. Before hammocks were invented, the mariner must have had but a sorry time of it, lying on a damp plank in his mediæval blankets. The Papuan who sleeps in his hollow tree, the Boesjeeman scooping out a resting-place in the warm sand of the brown karroo; these and their brother-savages may be said to have no regular beds. A heap of karoses, a mountain of greasy sheepskins, will content all the dusky children of South Africa. But the negroes of the Guinea coast construct clumsy bedsteads of cane or branches; and among the Indo-Chinese races of the Malayan and Burman countries, there is always a neat platform of bamboo whereon the mats are spread. The grand old four-poster, with all its cumbersome pomp and barbaric dignity, was the original bed of the upper ranks in France, in Germany, and especially in England, where an odd contrast was afforded between the small rooms and the colossal fabrics that nearly filled them. A great change was inaugurated when what was called the French bed began to appear in British chambers. It came in, at first, in a sneaking and apologetic manner; people were ashamed of their French beds, as they were ashamed to exhibit cottage pianos, one-horse carriages, and electro-plate. But the innovation was cheap and convenient, and not ugly, though the angular productions of English upholsterers never equal the graceful little tents which a Parisian workshop can turn out. Then succeeded what was dubbed the Arabian bed, presumed, doubtless, to be modelled on that which sustained the graceful form of the story-telling princess, Scherazade. Next, much to the detriment of vested interests, arose the light bed of brass or iron, much patronised by school-boys, subalterns, and miscellaneous bachelors. And then some inventor in perfidious Albion devised spring-mattresses; and though his countrymen eyed him coldly, having a rooted affection for goose-feathers, the lively Gauls snapped up the discovery in the most eager manner, and elaborated it into a bed so firm and so elastic as to approach perfection.

The Italians remain, on the whole, tolerably constant to their broad couches, irregularly stuffed with the husks of Indian corn, and which are more excellent in practice than in theory. But the Germans—when will the Teutonic mind, bemuddled as it is with beer, smoke, and philosophy, become practical enough to reform those strange structures? Was it as a penance that such a complication of evils was put together as that short and narrow bedstead, with obtuse footboard, that cramps a man of ordinary stature into the letter C, those thin pillows, those loose and light bed-clothes, so brief that they present the alternative of bare feet or unprotected shoulders, and that mountainous *plumeau*? The latter silken sack, filled with eider-down worth many florins a pound, is the delight of the German householder. It serves as a substitute for honest Witney blankets, and compels the luckless foreigner to be stowed by keeping it on, or frozen by flinging it off. It is true that the gay coverlet of quilted silk, gay crimson, cerulean blue, or pale sea-green, has a delusive smartness, but how often, in far-away provinces, are the sheets firmly tacked to this showy piece of property! I well remember, in the best hotel of a Croatian town, the assurance of the smiling *Kammermädchen* that the linen was clean, as it was always changed once a month, no matter how few travellers had slept between its hospitable folds.

What remains to be told? Of the air-bed, which may be a life-preserver in shipwreck, or a spencer in wet weather, which can be jammed into carpet-bags, fastened behind saddles, and almost pocketed; of the water-bed, whereon the wounded soldier reposes in hospital, while the nurse hurries for lint and bandages, and the surgeons are unrolling their glittering store of

disagreeable steel curiosities. These do not belong to common life. Perhaps invention is exhausted with regard to beds; perhaps they have reached their apex of comfort in the crafty conjunction of steel springs: their apogee of ponderous splendour was attained long since. Now a days, our task is to simplify, to weed and prune, and we prefer decency to pomp, and health to display. What is called a state-bed will soon have no place on earth, except, perhaps, if there is room for it, in the South Kensington Museum.

SCARECROW HALL.

It was a bitter cold night—so cold and wet, that even the stingy Mr Ralph Holdfast put an extra log upon his fire, and made himself a glass of hot brandy and water. He took the spirits from a press in his library, putting the bottle away again, corked close, as soon as he had measured out a dram; locked it up fast; shook the door, to see that it was secure, and buttoned his pocket upon the key. Then he mixed his drink; drew his chair close to the hearth; took a sip, which he swallowed economically; spread his hands over the blaze, and began to think. But the wind, which roared in his chimney—the chance drops of rain which found their way down it, sputtering in the fire, as if with surprise at the sudden change in their circumstances—the angry gusts of the storm, which every now and then splashed heavily against the casement, like spray from a wave, did not for a moment divert his thoughts from himself. What had he to do with men upon a lee-shore, who saw the breakers by the lightning's light, and felt the anchor drag? What cared he for homeless tramps who crouched close under the stack, and chattered curses at the wind? What cared he for the driver of the inexorable train, which rushed through the storm like a shot? What cared he for the wife of the fisherman who listened to the shrill moaning of the blast over the beach, and shuddered as the white flakes of foam struck against the darkened window-pane? Did he think of such as these? Not he; he thought about himself, and the resolution he had just been making, after much debate, to intrust his money to the Funds. Hitherto, he had kept it in his house—thirty thousand pounds—mostly in bank-notes of a large amount, once clean and crisp, but now limp from constant passage through his clammy, trembling hands.

He turned the key in the door of his room, and counted them again. They were all there. How could he best transmit them to the stockbroker? That was the question—that was what he was thinking about, as he took his drink in stingy sips. Yes! he would take them himself; he would carry them to town the very next day in the lining of his coat—that was a safe place—the very next day, and leave directions for the interest to be invested and added to the capital as fast as it grew. Then he drained the last drops from the tumbler before him, and chuckled audibly to himself. Ha! what was that? It sounded like an echo. He thrust away the pocket-book, and glanced at the window. The curtains were drawn close; it was impossible for any one to have seen into the room. There was a step without, no doubt; he heard it distinctly in a lull of the storm; then the door-bell rang. Taking up the candle, and going out of the room to bid his old servant, Martha, not answer the summons, he crossed the hall just in time to see her open the door, and a figure enter the house. With it came a puff of wind, which extinguished both her light and his. Retreating hastily to his room, and putting a match to the fire, he saw the stranger close behind him on the rug. Before he had time to express astonishment or alarm, a voice said: 'You cannot be expected to remember me by this light, and coming in this sudden way; but I am your brother John. I returned to England yesterday, and came straight from Liverpool to this place.'

Now, Mr Ralph Holdfast had not seen his brother for five-and-twenty years. The brother had been in Australia; and though Ralph had occasionally heard from him, no letters had arrived during the last eighteen months—a silence which the miser had not been tempted to break, inasmuch as he had seen in a colonial newspaper that his brother had become a bankrupt, and was probably ruined—perhaps dead. For some time, however, he dreaded his return, in rags, and had often rehearsed with himself the scene when he should get rid of him for good. And now here he was—on the hearth-rug, wet through, with, as he fancied, a poverty-stricken look in his face, and a poverty-stricken sound in his voice. Here he was, with one hand resting on the table by the empty tumbler, and the other held out to him. Now or never. His hand was actually held out, to plead and beg, perhaps; so he put his own into his pocket, where he felt the notes, and gazed at the stranger. Yes, he remembered his only brother's face distinctly; it reminded him of his father's when he saw him last, after he was dead—the features were so white and pinched. Looking steadily at him, with his hand in his pocket, he said, slowly, as if he were repeating a form of words: 'Brother John, of course I am glad to see you alive [which was false], but you cannot expect me to support you. You were well provided for. Why do you come to ask assistance of me? Do you think I'm a fool, to be touched by tatters?'

The visitor had asked for nothing; but he replied: 'For four dreary months I have been sailing with strangers over the sea. Often and often they have talked among themselves about their friends in England: many met them on the pier; all have gone home but me; and now—I will leave you. I have not begged; but this I say, that you had better, in idiot pity, clothe the very scarecrows which flap in the windy fields, than hoard with careful wisdom only for yourself. Farewell!' and in a moment he was gone.

Ralph had no time to stop him, or reply. He had not calculated on so abrupt a conclusion to the interview; indeed, he had nothing on his tongue but further insult to the expected beggar. When, therefore, his brother did not beg, he felt rather at a loss, and really had a twinge, as if there were something not quite right somewhere inside. But he got over it soon, and muttering to himself: 'Idiot pity, indeed!' several times, barred the outer door with his own hands, and sending Martha to bed with an injunction to let no more 'scarecrows' into the house, locked himself up again in his own room.

Having taken out some money for the necessary travelling expenses of the morrow, he produced a stout black cloth frock-coat; then opening a seam inside the breast, he inserted the bank-notes, and with a needle and thread successfully closed the aperture. After this, perhaps as much from force of habit as anything else, he locked the empty box in which his money had hitherto been kept, and which had 'Glass' marked outside (to throw thieves off the scent), put it in a closet, and went to bed, quite jubilant in the consciousness of having at last settled the knotty point concerning the disposition of his money. 'Now,' he said to himself, 'I shall be comfortable. Neither thieves nor incendiaries will find much to harm; nothing but the old house, which the first can't steal; or myself, who sleep too light to be caught in a fire.' The 'old house,' as he called it, was a tumbledown rambling place, with timber enough in it for half-a-dozen modern habitations. But there is not much use in my describing it, for it was burned to the ground that very night; every rafter, beam, and plank: there was nothing left in the morning but four smoking walls, and a great black charred heap, which steamed in the still falling rain. Ralph, however, was not caught. The roaring of the storm, which did not abate till sunrise, hid the sound of the crackling flames while it swept

them on ; but he heard them, and rushed out of his room while it was as yet only filled with smoke.

There was already a crowd around, for the village was close by—a half-dressed, useless crowd, which stood to windward of the flames. Into this Ralph ran before he well knew where he was ; then, suddenly recollecting that he had left his money behind, he made as if he would enter the house again, but a dozen hands restrained him.

'My money !' he shouted, as he struggled to free himself—'my money ! Robbers ! Let me go ! or I will swear you have done it all yourselves !' But they would not let the old man return, for he was so frantic, that they felt themselves answerable for his safety.

At last a young man, who was well known for his feats of daring, said : 'I'd go without a word if a babe were left behind ; but not for your box, sir, without a price.'

'Fifty pounds, then !' shouted Ralph—'fifty pounds ! A box in my room !—in a closet ?'

'What is it like ?' said the other.

'Glass !—glass marked on the top.'

Off he dashed, and in about five minutes returned with the box in his hand. Ralph caught it in his arms, and unlocked it, for he always had slept with the key about his neck, and had it still, then staggered a few paces backward, and fell insensible to the ground. The box was empty. In the agony of his fright, he had forgotten the coat, to which he had so recently transferred the notes ; but when he looked for them in their old place, the remembrance of his occupation the previous evening flashed upon him, and he fell as if he had been struck ; and so he was, but by no mortal hand. The village doctor, who by this time had joined the crowd, feeling his pulse, and looking at him by the light of the blaze, said at once : 'He has a paralytic stroke. Is there any one belonging to him under whose charge he can be put ?' But not a soul stepped forward. He had not a friend in the place. Old Martha, the only other inmate of his house, was missing, till they found her, afterwards, dead, beneath a great heap of blackened tiles.

They were about to lay him, for the present, in an outhouse, which was untouched, when a stranger, pushing his way through the crowd, came, and looking on him, said : 'Leave him to me. I was with him late last night. I am—his friend.' So they made way ; and the stranger took him to the village inn, had him laid in a bed, and sat watching by his side all that day. No one but the doctor was admitted ; and when he came out into the fire of questions which met him down stairs, all they could get out of him was : 'I did not know Mr Holdfast had a friend so near ; he could not nurse him more tenderly if he were an only brother.' In which speech the doctor shewed more sagacity than he supposed. But he kept to himself the stranger's intimation, that he would pay all the expenses attendant on the sick man's treatment. For John Holdfast was not ruined ; he had been a bankrupt, it is true, but not dishonourably ; and already two years had elapsed since that time, during which he had made some return towards a competency ; indeed, he had latterly made such successful purchases in the neighbourhood of a rising town, that he had come back to England for the express purpose of laying his plans before his brother, and inducing him to embark his fortune in the property, which now insured a safe and large return. But after the reception which he met, his heart recoiled from partnership with so mean a spirit, and he left the miser's house with only a sad reproach, as we have seen.

When the stricken man revived, it was to drivelling life. His brain remained affected. He had lost all memory of the fire ; and his weakened intellect still glimmered about only one idea. For a long time, those about him could not make out what he said ;

until at last, when he was enabled to totter about with a crutch, they found him in the garden of the cottage to which his brother had removed him, trying to wrap a cloak about a scarecrow. Then his brother knew what he had been trying to say. There he was standing by the tattered effigy, muttering 'Pity,' 'Poor man,' 'So cold !' And for many months, whenever he saw one of those stuffed bundles of figures in the fields, he would make his way to it, sometimes taking off his own coat, and putting it on the thing, with broken sentences of pity and drivelling tears ; for his brother's parting words had sunk into his heart, and now, out of the broken wreck of his thoughts, he had patched together this strange amende for the cruelty and covetousness of his old life. Something still undestroyed in the man had risen up and asserted itself, though it had been so long cramped and buried. The miser's habit had passed away, but with it the power to direct the better impulse which survived.

The touching tenderness with which he sought for and clothed the present objects of his compassion became generally known in that neighbourhood. Some few were cruel enough to laugh at the Nemesis which had fallen upon him ; and once or twice a former victim of his avarice, whom he had nearly ruined by a lawsuit—as cruel as his former self—sent him bundles of rags in scorn, or led him to bestow his charity on some 'scarecrow in the windy fields,' and then distressed him beyond measure by beating it to pieces with a stick, and leaving him wringing his hands and crying over the tattered fragments.

Meanwhile his brother grew sorely perplexed. The small sum which he had brought back with him to England was nearly exhausted ; and he hired himself to a farmer on an estate hard by, for whom he served among the cattle, having had much experience in their management in the colony. He sold the plot of ground on which his brother's house had stood, and the interest of this was all that the poor sufferer had for his support—not enough, for a considerable share of the brother's earnings went towards the same object. The paralytic could not be left alone, and several shillings a week were necessarily spent on the wages of an attendant. John Holdfast would have returned to the colony, but he could not bear the thought of leaving his brother behind ; and it was apparently hopeless to think of taking him with him. The medical men said that the voyage would probably prove fatal ; so he remained, working, and hoping that some change would come.

At last it did come—slowly, to be sure—but there were clear intervals of sense, which gradually lengthened, and joined themselves together. The visits to the fields in search of 'Poor,' as the temporary idiot had called the senseless effigies, grew short and few, until sometimes three or four months had passed away without any reference to them.

But the fire and all about it was still a blank in the memory of Ralph. He seemed to waken to an intelligent life, but it was a new one. Nothing could surpass the affection which he shewed to John, though he still forgot he was his brother. The two men now worked together—for strength of limb came back with strength of brain—and John entertained good hopes of their being able to return together to the colony. He heard well of his property there ; but though he might have made some money by parting with it, the prospect of its providing a competency for them both in their old age, if it were left alone a little longer, delayed the temptation to a sale.

At last it seemed as if some decision must be made. The estate on which the brothers worked came into the market, and John received notice that his services in the buying and selling of cattle would be required no longer. His brother grew daily better in mind as well as body, though he never referred to the fire, or to the loss of his property, and John was unwilling

to mention it, lest the fabric of his returning health should perhaps be suddenly and irretrievably upset; nor did he try to explain their relationship. Once, indeed, he approached the subject, but Ralph—who knew himself only by that designation, having forgotten his surname—became so agitated, as if some terrible chord had been touched, that he stopped; and the next day Ralph told him that he had had a hideous dream. So he waited and hoped. But now that his office was about to be taken away, he proposed emigration, saying that he had means of his own far away, which they two together might improve, and live upon in comfort. Then they made inquiries about ships; and John calculated how far the remnant of his money would go, adding the price of the land on which his brother's house had stood. There was enough to pay for their passage, and enable them to carry out some things which would fetch a good return by their sale in the colony.

Everything was settled. The estate with which John had been connected was already in the market, and the two made no secret of their intended voyage. No one knew that they were brothers, and the neighbours had too much pity for the paralytic, or too much interest in their own affairs, to trouble Ralph with any reference to his former character and life. There was long a sort of mystery about him, which repelled as much curiosity as it provoked, and so protected him. Only Mr Savage, whom he had nearly ruined, ever meddled with Ralph—sending him bundles of rags, as we have seen, and sometimes leading him out into the fields to make sport of his idiot pity. But now that Ralph was a man again, or nearly so, Savage had left him alone for months. It was not till they were on the point of sailing that he saw him again, and the opportunity was so tempting that he could not resist the cruel indulgence. Everything was settled. The boxes were corded; and John's little capital was safe in a pocket-book, ready to purchase the articles which they proposed to sell in the colony—when it was stolen—and they never heard of it again. Some thief broke into their cottage, and carried it off in the dead of the night. John made every inquiry; the police searched the neighbourhood in vain. It was gone. There was nothing for it but to write to the agents in Australia; and by parting with a portion of his property, get the means to return there. It was a provoking disappointment and delay. The two brothers took lodgings in the nearest market-town, and John got some stray jobs out of the cattle-fair which was held there, which enabled them to pay their way after a fashion. Now, it so happened that Mr Savage, who owed the old grudge against Ralph—though he had now recovered from the loss occasioned by the law-suit with him—lived in the same place, and cruelly twitted him with his late misfortune. So, often, while John was away at times, the glimpses of the past seemed to return to the still recovering man. One evening, while the two were sitting together, Ralph said: 'I can't help thinking there must be something in what that man Savage says about my having once received a large sum of money from him. I can't tell how it is, but strange thoughts often come into my mind so strongly that they look like memories almost. I fancy, for instance, that formerly I was rich.' Mr Savage said to-day he wondered why I went abroad, and did not buy the estate for you on which you have been working. It is for sale. I wish I could. He called you my brother.' and then the old vacant look came across his face; while John, alarmed, hastened to restore the thoughts which had accompanied his recovery, by speaking hopefully of their voyage, and repeating the well-known calculation of the number of days which must elapse before they could receive a remittance, and embark. At last the post came, and with it a letter for John; but when he had read it, he let it drop upon the floor, and

covered his face with his hands. The property was lost, hopelessly lost! His agent had got possession of it by forgery, had sold it, every inch, and spent the proceeds. He was then in Melbourne jail; and the letter came from a stranger, who, with polite condolence, communicated the disastrous news. A newspaper, which arrived by the same post, put the fact beyond a doubt, for it contained a full report of the trial, in which Mr John Holdfast was mentioned as a sufferer by the frauds which his agent had committed.

The story soon came out, and there was not one in the town who did not feel for the two friends. Yes, there was one—Mr Savage, who was glad, and actually said to John a week afterwards: 'So you are not going to the colony after all; you will be obliged to provide for your brother here. Broadlands is not sold yet. It's a pity you are not going though, for I had made up a parcel of clothes for you to wear in the bush; however, I will send it now; it will do for you to give to some "poor" man.'

And that evening a servant came with a bundle, which he left for Mr Ralph, with Mr Savage's compliments. Ralph was going to throw it in the fire, when John interposed: 'Nay,' said he, 'let me have a look too.' So they opened the pack, and found a ragged old coat. Ralph started: the whole past flashed back upon his memory. There was the identical coat in the lining of which he had sewed the notes, three years before. The man who saved the box had stolen the coat, which had last been really worn by a scarecrow. Ralph caught up a knife from the table, and ripped it open: there were the notes, stained indeed, but safe—thirty thousand pounds—just the price of Broadlands. So he took Mr Savage's advice, and stayed in England; and the house where the two brothers Holdfast happily lived and died changed names as well as owners, for, though it stood in Broadlands, everybody round, knowing the strange story of its purchase, called it Scarecrow Hall.

GIPSIES.

THERE are some abuses which almost soar to the dignity of institutions, and some spectacles which, to our fancy, are so completely part and parcel of Old England, that we can scarcely imagine the yet Older England in which they were novel or unknown. What can be more familiar, yet more striking, than the gipsy-camp upon the wayside turf, the bright-eyed brood of tatterdemalions scrambling around the weather-stained tents, the wrinkled sibyl who starts up to tell our fortunes and 'annex' our silver? Our artists, though their eyes have been more intent upon conventional Italian peasants and unctuous Spanish muleteers than on the picturesque groups nearer home, have a real affection for the gipsy. We all know with what charming effect a patch of bright colour, a scarlet cloak, a yellow kerchief, sets off the leafy verdure of some green English lane; how mystically the red bivouac fire flickers through the shadows of evening; and how even the lean horse tethered to the bank invites the study of a painter. So entirely has custom interwoven the gipsy-tent, the gipsy cart or caravan, and the presence of these Oriental loungers, with British rural life, that they appear indigenous to our island; and yet the Zingari is no more native to our cold climate and moody skies than the cat there purring by our fireside. Look attentively at the latter as she rises to cross the room, and in the lithe power of those velvet-skinned limbs, the soft foot-fall, the peculiar tigerish carriage of the head, and the glance of the restless eye, you trace not only a half-tamed nature, but a tropical extraction. So with the gipsy: there is the same idle activity, if so seeming a paradox be permitted, the same careless strength, the same feline acuteness and suspicion, and the same suggestion of Eastern descent.

Some philosophers tell us that all men had originally the same complexion, and, indeed, there is a tradition of the rabbis which declares Adam and Eve to have been *black*. They, moreover, assure us that climate and mode of life fully account for the diversities of colour which we find among the nations of the globe; though we believe there is a powerful dissent rising up against this doctrine. The negro's jetty hue, they say, is said to be caused by the secretion from the true skin of a peculiar deep-tinted pigment, evoked by the continual action of a blazing sun and moist climate; the copper tinge of the American Indian is assigned to the dry, ozonised air of the New World, its summer heats, and the effects of continual exposure to weather. The sages in question omit to inform us how many generations under an African sun may be warranted to bring the offspring of British parents to a coal-black hue, or what amount of naturalisation will whiten the *Ethiop*. But they also overlook one or two isolated facts which give a partial support to their darling theories—as that Hindus become remarkably bleached after a few months spent at the higher hill-stations of India, such as Simlah, Ootacamund, and the like; that negro babies are born white; and that a couple of centuries have effected a great change in the aspect of the North American colonists. But, on the other hand, the gipsy, our own domestic Ishmaelite, affords a striking example of the tenacity with which the physical characteristics of a race can endure the most entire change of temperature. We not unfrequently meet with whole families as swarthy as Moors, and whom their progenitors of four hundred years ago could not have surpassed in orientalism of aspect, even after all the effects of English climate and weather for a score of generations. To this day we may encounter in our rambles Hayreddin the Maugrabin, just as Scott depicted him when trotting by the side of Quentin Durward. True, the outer husk has changed a little; turban and haick have given place to a loose suit from the slop-seller's booth; Klepper, the pony, has lost his Arabian breeding; and the shovel stirrups and the scimitar have been disposed of to the dealer in old iron. But the man is the same; in his roguish, sparkling eyes you may read a spirit more vivacious than that of Gil Blas or Scapin, and his very walk partakes of the limber indolence of the panther. Talk to him, and if you have tact and accomplishments enough to win his confidence, he will perhaps impart to you, in Hayreddin's own language, stories quaint and wild enough for Hayreddin's own lips. And Zillah, or Zara, though her Arabian name may have been corrupted into Sally, is not unworthy a moment's notice, as she comes smiling forward to read the lines of destiny on your honour's palm. What white teeth the jade has got! All Mr Rimmel's patent tooth-powder, all Messrs Price and Gosnell's brushes, could never blanch our Anglo-Saxon incisors to such a pearly lustre as that. The eyes, too, are glorious eyes—great, flashing, liquid stars—and none of your hazels and browns (called black by courtesy), but genuine sloc-black, with lashes like night itself. Raven hair, straight delicate features, a well-shaped, active figure—such as you may see by hundreds in Hindustan, when the women of the village come out to fill their pitchers at the tank—and a rich complexion of bloom and olive, make up no uncomely picture. Pity that the Zingara damsels should have so brief a tenure of their charms, should so early transmute themselves into a gaunt Meg Merrilles, like that terrible matron who is flinging sticks on the fire as she tosses back her snaky hair; and then into wrinkled crones, yellow, grizzled, and weird, like her who is whining at your elbow. But they blossom and fade in true Asiatic style.

Let us trace the pedigree of this strange people, these waifs and strays of the world, premising that their origin has puzzled many a wise head, until

the light of modern research fell upon it. The various names by which the wanderers have been designated throughout Europe, denote the extreme perplexity into which their immigration threw the sons of Japhet. In Eastern Europe they were called *Zigeuner*; in France and Germany, *Bohemians*; in Spain, *Maugrabees* and *Zingalas*; in Britain, *Egyptians*, which latter word was easily corrupted into *gypsies* or *gipseyes*. The title of *Bohemians* was acquired from the fact that Bohemia became the habitat of many of their hordes at a very early date, and that it was from the Bohemian heaths that they emerged to astonish Western Europe. *Zingaro* means a wanderer, and *Maugrabee* is simply a *Moor* from Africa, derived from *moghreb*, or the west. But the voice of fame has principally assigned to the gipsy tribes an Egyptian origin, and those mainly concerned in the matter, the rovers themselves, caught greedily at the suggestion. There are gipseys in Egypt, as indeed, with the exception of Scandinavia, there are gipseys everywhere; and many of the earliest arrivals reported themselves, perhaps with truth, to have come from the shores of the Nile. But there were reasons which induced these nomads to adopt the character of native Egyptians, as we shall presently see. Their first introduction to the civilised world was in the year of grace 1427, when two troops of them, numbering about three hundred individuals, reached Paris, and created much excitement and curiosity. They numbered more women than men, but among them were, as the chronicle sets forth, 'a prince, two dukes, six counts, and several of the inferior nobility.' It was into such burlesques of European distinctions as these that the *muscadins* of the period translated the *Jemadars* and *Cotwalls* of an Asiatic tribe. These strange immigrants amazed all men by their dusky complexions, and the tawdry and dirty finery of their attire. They were dressed in the Asiatic style, chiefly in yellow and red, they wore turbans and crooked swords, and some of their great men had showy ornaments of silver, but the general aspect of the horde was squalid and uncouth to the last degree. They had a specious story to tell, giving themselves out, as they did, for native Christians from Egypt, the relics of a nation that had been despoiled and massacred by the infidel Turks. They further hinted that they were the legatees of the ancient mysteries of those magicians who had contended with Moses; that the 'white spells,' or *thaumaturgy*, of Egypt had been preserved among them; and that they were ready to foretell, by palmistry and the stars, the future fortunes of the Parisians. Nothing more was required than this spice of superstition to throw a temporary halo over the travellers. Paris welcomed them heartily, as martyrs for the faith, as persecuted Catholics, and as fortune-tellers who had inherited all the wisdom of Hieropolis. The king fed them. The clergy re-baptised them, lest there should have been any irregularity in the ceremony of the chrism as practised in the Coptic church, a supposition rendered the more probable from the fact that no priests accompanied the exodus. The ladies and gallants of Paris hastened to submit their hands to the inspection of these dark-skinned sibyls, and a golden harvest was reaped from the curious and the credulous. Ere long, new hordes arrived, but already the popularity of the new-comers was on the wane. The French began to discover that the morals of their guests were not strict, nor their notions of property rigid. Pilferings, frauds, dances of a character too indecorous even for the France of the fifteenth century, all kinds of offences against the law, roused the anger of the authorities and people, and the Parisians discovered that the interesting confessors they had been canonising were but very sinful heathens masquerading in borrowed plumes. By edict of the parliament, the Egyptians were driven forth from the capital, and forbidden to approach it under pain of whipping. Very soon the penalty was

augmented to death itself. The provincial parliaments took up the ball of legislation, and soon the 'vagabonds,' Bohemians, Egyptians, and what not, were put beyond the pale of law, hunted like wolves, and reduced to a still worse condition than the Pariahs of their native land. But in spite of gibbet and wheel, in spite of scourge and branding iron, the outcast race held fast to the land that strove to eject them. Chased hither and thither, slaughtered, tortured, evil entreated, the wanderers shewed all the stubborn endurance, the craft, and the hardihood of wild beasts. They were not always hunted. They gained a precarious protection here and there; they kept up their profession as wizards and prophets, they sold elixirs, love-philtres, amulets, told fortunes, cast horoscopes, mended ornaments, patched kettles, repaired broken pottery, just as they do now. By these small arts, combined with poaching and petty theft, they kept body and soul together, and camped alternately in the wastes or among the villages.

They spread wonderfully over Europe. Before a century after their first appearance, they were plentiful in Germany, in Spain, Italy, Hungary, Britain. They were also found in Turkey, Greece, Syria, and Egypt, always a race apart, always migratory and camping out like the Bedouin, and always keeping perfectly distinct from the nation in whose land they dwelt. In Mohammedan countries the gipsy called himself a Moalem; in Christendom, he became a reputed Christian; but he seldom saw the inside of mosque or minster, and lived, by all accounts, in the darkness of contented disbelief. It was James IV. of Scotland who issued letters-patent conferring legal authority over his own tribe on 'our trustie and well-beloved John Faa, Lord and Erle of Litel Egypte.' This 'Lord and Erle of Litel Egypte' is the Johnnie Faa first mentioned in Scottish ballad. But it must have been a grandson or great-nephew of this swarthy nobleman whose elopement with Lady Cassilis furnished the theme for the Galwegian bard, to whose lyre we owe the poem whose refrain is

They were fifteen valiant men
Black, but very bonnie.

In those days, according to the rude but not unmusical scrapes of song in which they have been embalmed, we find the gipsy preserving much of the Eastern character. The sweet singing of their minstrels is mentioned, and to this day the musicians of Hungary are all gipsies; the gift of 'ginger,' then esteemed a wondrous rarity from Ind, and the oath of the chief, 'by the staff of his spear,' are especially noteworthy in the ballad. But Johnnie Faa did not long keep the good-will of royalty, and the Egyptians were put to the horn at kirk and market as broken men, thieves, and outlaws. They were never extirpated, but they were often treated with a cruel and capricious severity, in spite of which they still abounded on the Borders, the village of Yetholm being mainly peopled by gipsies, who are still loyal to the family of Faa. This is perhaps a solitary instance in which the gipsies have abandoned their open-air life to dwell in permanent abodes, but I believe that the village is only crowded in winter, its population roving the country as long as the pleasant summer weather tempts them. Nor is this temptation a trifling one. Many of us have looked with a sigh of half-irrational longing at the tents on the moor, and have had aspirations for the freedom from care, the incessant change of scene, and the unfettered liberty of the Zingaro. Lured by such a spell, not only have many of the dissolute, the lazy, or the desperate, joined the migratory tribes, but educated men have abandoned a cultured home for a seat beside the fire and a share of the patchwork tent. It is remarkable that we know nothing of the manner of their first entry into England. From time to time they were confounded with strollers, broken soldiers, and all kinds of

vagrants, against whom proclamations were fulminated, but they make no figure in history. It may be that the sharp, hard laws of Henry VIII., and the merciless rigour with which the beggars and vagabonds with whom the land swarmed were 'put down,' may have thinned the gipsies. At any rate Shakespeare has failed to introduce into any forest or rural scene in his dramas such apparently tempting materials as the Bohemians presented; and Spanish play-wrights made capital out of the picturesque wanderers, long before English literature deigns to catalogue them with indigenous vagabonds.

In the course of the last century much attention was paid to the singular phenomenon which such a parasitic race presented in the heart of wealthy kingdoms. But all efforts to trace the gipsy to the cradle of his nation proved fruitless; and although words enough of their traditional tongue were collected to form a vocabulary, the key was not yet forged that could unlock the mystery. In the earlier part of the last century, before the conquests of Clive, and the learned labours of Jones, Wolf, D'Herbelot, and others had popularised the study of the oriental dialects, and especially of Sanscrit, it was impossible to obtain a bird's-eye view of the Indo-German tongues. At length the campaign of Egypt solved the enigma: the Sepoys of Baird's army at once recognised the gipsies of that country as the exact types of certain low-caste hordes in India, the Jats, the Coles, the Pariahs, Bheels, Gonds, and so forth. The British grenadier on his part could claim the dusky nomads beside the Nile as identical in aspect and habits with those he had seen on the banks of Thames or Tyne, and the chain of evidence became perfected. A gipsy vocabulary, when compared with a similar compendium of Hindustani, shews a surprising likeness, and although the words derived from the Persian or Arabic may vary, those from the old Hindi are nearly the same. It has been plausibly conjectured that some irruption of the Mahomedan conquerors was the wave which cast these fragments of the Hindu social system on the shores of Europe. But it must be remembered that, with the language of the Aryan race, the gipsies by no means brought with them the Aryan religions. No trace of Buddhism or Brahmanism is to be detected in them: they have no scruples about conforming to any religion, nor do they esteem themselves defiled by eating any animal food, reptiles and carrion inclusive. I have seen them among the Turks, filling the office of suridjee or postilion, and as gaily accoutred in turban and Mameluke costume as our old friend in *Quentin Durward*, but they had no solid repute for belief in Islam, despite their external adherence to its forms. In England, they occasionally have a christening, more rarely a wedding, performed in a church; and they are very fond of laying their chiefs in consecrated earth, with all the ceremonies of religion. In 1810, Ralph Stanley, a gipsy king, was buried at Burntwood, in Staffordshire. Four hundred gipsies collected at his obsequies; they listened, bareheaded and respectful, to the funeral-service, and afterwards returning to the churchyard, performed a service of their own over the grave, chanting a jargon of rhymes which no one could comprehend. It is very difficult to discover the actual religious belief of a gipsy. Probably, 'none at all' would be a true verdict in the case of the majority, while their chief persons, although less ignorant, have preserved a wonderful farraige of astrological absurdities, and seem to put more credence in planetary influence than in aught else. It has been supposed that their creed may be a relic of the Sabean star-worship, but they more resemble rude epicureans, and are very little concerned with any other than the visible world. They are still under the moral sway, at least, of certain families, of which some, like the Faas, are probably descended from their aboriginal leaders; and

others, like the Stanleys and Gordons, may perhaps derive their patronymics from some well-born scapegrace in auld langsyne. There are many so-called kings, and the communication between the different tribes is frequent and rapid. In 1836, a dispute arose at that extinct place of revelry, Greenwich Fair, between a gipsy potentate and the lessee of a well-known dancing-booth, the Crown and Anchor, respecting the priority of hiring a certain piece of ground. What the wild monarch wanted with the ground in question, I cannot say, whether to devote it to 'prick the garter,' or gilt gingerbread, or pink-eyed Albinoes, but in any case the decision of law was against him. But such numbers of the king's liegemen—shaggy, bronzed, cudgel-carrying fellows—came flocking to the place, threatening loudly to pull down the dancing-booth, and immolate its owner, that a riot was only averted by the presence of a troop of hussars, who patrolled the fair for three days as a measure of precaution. Since then either gipsy royalty has grown feeble, or the arm of the police has waxed stronger, for no conflict has ever taken place with these tributary princes.

It is not easy to induce a gipsy to avow that he has a peculiar language or religion. The language, that Romany tongue which Mr Borrow has made such use of, is a sort of bastard Hindustani, mixed with all sorts of outlandish words, and it forms a convenient jargon for those whose life is not strictly legal. In its most corrupt form, it is called 'thieves' Latin' or 'patter.' A gipsy is always averse to betraying his knowledge of a dialect that labours under such a stigma, and unless you can acquire enough of it to accost him in the right words and with the right accent, you will receive no satisfactory answer. A phrase in simple Hindustani may cause the Ishmaelite to prick up his ears, but it will be beyond his comprehension. If, however, you can bribe one of them to act as your teacher, you may learn enough to excite their wonder and friendship in all lands, and, as Prince Hal boasted, 'to drink with every tinker in his own language.' It is not every nominal gipsy who understands Romany. Many of them shew by their blue eyes, light hair, and light complexions, that they are not of Indian stock, but Anglo-Saxons run wild. The true breed may be known by their jetty hair and eyes, their pliant forms, their somewhat delicate limbs, and that peculiar complexion which is unlike that of the whole world beside. The author of *Lazengro* has done much to mystify inquirers. He has tried to make us believe the gipsy an Armenian, a Chaldean, and perhaps of a nationality yet more recondite; but the identity of the race with several Indian tribes is as clear as day, and we may faithfully believe Old King Cole to have been a most jovial monarch of the 'Coles,' or low-caste natives of Dekkhan—perhaps their leader in the emigration. In all lands they beg, and pilfer, and tell fortunes, and promise rich and handsome husbands to credulous maids, and tinker, and mend china. They have some traditional skill, too, in the art of the goldsmith, in basket-weaving, and smithcraft; they are jockeys, fiddlers, and pugilists. Cheerfully will they eat braxy mutton, or partake of the dead horse or cow, if the hen-roost be too well guarded, the keepers too alert. As poachers, they are unrivalled; their famous gipsy stew in the great kettle over the fire is seldom lacking in game, and by drugs they can stupefy the fish in a pond or stream, till they float helpless on the water, an easy prize. Child-stealing and poisoning of animals are charges more often made against them than substantiated. It is certain that they are light-fingered and vindictive; but they are grateful for a little kindness, are usually civil and obliging, and, unless molested, never rob within miles of their camp. In spite of utilitarian reformers, I for one should be sorry if the gipsies were 'improved' off the earth,

and if no future traveller in England could hope to catch a glimpse of the Murillo-like group gathering in autumn around the smoky fire in the woodland lane.

TITLE-PAGES.

A HUNDRED years ago, literary baptisms were more carefully performed than at the present time. When our powdered and peruked ancestors carried their intellectual offspring to Paternoster Row for benefit of the ordinance, the important question, 'Name this child,' received a much more lengthy reply than modern parents trouble themselves to furnish. Two or three words, with a motto appended, were not held sufficient to admit an infant book into the rights and privileges of literary fellowship; still less was the officiating priest content with those ambiguous, nought-containing couplets under which many modern children of the brain struggle through life, and make a good thing of it after all. When, by dint of careful study and much perseverance—for men did not rush into print then as they do now a days—a writer had produced something worthy the public reading, that fact was announced in a decorous and comprehensive style. A title-page was then a thing of moment, a synopsis of succeeding contents, a fair, honest, straightforward statement of what the reader might expect to find on further perusal. Judging from old library catalogues, the naming of a book must have required well-nigh as much care as its composition. Take, for instance, this specimen of elaborate explicitness, and fancy it figuring in a modern publisher's circular—

MATHEMATICAL INSTITUTIONS.

IN THREE PARTS.

1. CLAVIS,	{	KEY,
2. JANUA,		
3. ANCILLA,		HANDMAID,

TO THE

MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES.

WHEREIN

THE DOCTRINE OF PLAIN AND SPHERICAL TRIANGLES IS SUCCINCTLY HANDLED, GEOMETRICALLY DEMONSTRATED, ARITHMETICALLY, GEOMETRICALLY, INSTRUMENTALLY PERFORMED AND PRACTICALLY APPLY'D TO

GEOMETRY,	SCIOPGRAPHIA,
COSMOGRAPHY,	NAVIGATION,
GEOGRAPHY,	AND THEORIES OF
ASTRONOMY,	THE PLANETS.

BY WILL LEYBOURNE, PHILOMATHEMA.

Ingedere ut Proficias.

1704.

Why, a modern author would cram all this into half-a-dozen words, and think it too long even then.

Now, whatever else this title-page omits, it certainly informs us, honestly enough, what we may expect to find in the book—a useful piece of information which cannot always be gathered from modern advertisements. An old gentleman of harmless, reflective habits walks forth into the fields to meditate at eventide, and comes to the conclusion—that justly or otherwise, we presume not to decide—that the reading public will be advantaged by said meditations. A sentimentalist of the present day would have introduced them to the world as 'Crumbs,' 'Musings,' 'Fragments,' 'Stray Blossoms,' or some other title equally enigmatical. Mr Sturm, however, goes to the root of the matter, and gives us the following succinct and explicit definition of his work: 'Reflections for every Day in the Year, on the Works of God, and of His Providence, throughout all Nature. In Two Volumes.' Writers of the present day, however, have learned to do things differently, and, as they think,

more wisely; they use title-pages as Talleyrand used words—to conceal instead of explaining. It would be curious to recount the blunders to which the modern system of naming books has led. Not long ago, the corporation of a north of England town resolved to erect a new cattle-market. The mayor of the place, who was on the look-out for suitable plans, ordered a copy of a recently published work on 'The Construction of Sheep-folds.' To his complete dumbfounderment, he received, by return of post, a tractate on 'Religious Denominations!' An inexperienced young farmer, wishing to add to his stock of agricultural knowledge, bought, on speculation, a book called 'Ploughing and Sowing,' and found it to contain a minute account of some benevolent lady's operations amongst the labourers of a country district in Yorkshire. We have heard of a work entitled 'Sowing and Reaping,' published since; and we imagine the series will be continued in 'Thrashing and Winnowing,' 'Sorting and Grinding,' until it comes to a conclusion in 'Kneading and Baking.'

Look down the columns of an advertising-sheet, and you can make neither sense nor reason of half the titles. An enterprising publisher of books of a serious tendency offers you 'Golden Ointment' in a gilt wrapper for sixpence; but what particular ailment the preparation is intended to reach, remains a mystery. We have 'Healing Waters,' bound in cloth, and 'Balm for the Wounded,' at a shilling the dozen. A little further down, we learn that 'Sunbeams' are two-and-sixpence each. We have no fault to find with this statement; sunbeams ought to be worth half-a-crown anywhere, but when British Islanders are called upon to pay three-and-sixpence for 'Mists and Shadows,' we think the price rather exorbitant. Surely the Scotch, at anyrate, might be supplied with the former of these two articles at a lower figure.

Broken meat appears to command a ready sale in the literary market. Those who prefer their 'serious reading' in this shape, may have 'Crumbs' and 'Fragments' for a penny each, or a shilling a dozen, a liberal allowance being made to bazaars. 'Scattered Portions' and 'Daily Scraps' are largely advertised, together with 'Evening Morsels' and 'Morning Food.' The price is not always affixed, but we presume they are sold by dry measure. This homoeopathic refreshment needs to be taken in repeated doses, judging from the numerous editions called for. One lady presents us with a 'few thoughts thrown carelessly together—a favourite method of composition thin with the fair sex—and modestly describes the mixture as 'Weeds.' Another, who is of opinion that her productions are decidedly sparkling, introduces them to the public as 'Diamond Dust.' 'Idle Moments' are to be bought in packets, twenty for a shilling, and 'Vacant Hours,' like eggs, for fifteen-pence a score.

This class of current literature draws largely upon the vegetable kingdom for title-pages. A well-known writer brings us 'Green Leaves' at so much apiece, and offers them with gilt edges at a trifling advance in price. Another, disposed, we should imagine, to look on the dark side of things, asks five shillings for a 'Cypress Wreath' elegantly bound in morocco. 'Mown Grass' has been introduced to the public as a desirable little volume; we hope a second edition will shortly be ready, in which the material shall have reached the state of hay. 'Withered Leaves' may be had for sixpence each; and 'Apples of Gold' are offered to us with a discount of twopence in the shilling ready money.

It is chiefly, however, in 'biographical sketches suitable for family reading,' that we find the most extensive variety of botanical specimens. Twenty years ago, we were conversant with a magazine in which the lives of good children formed a prominent

part. We feel it our duty to state that the leading impression formed upon our juvenile mind from the perusal of such sketches was this, that if we behaved very well, and always did what we were told, we should be sure to die before ten years old, and have our lives written in the 'Child's Friend.' This, however, is only a passing remark, and may not agree with general experience.

These biographies usually commenced in the following style: 'Life and happy death of John So-and-so. The subject of this memoir was born at such a place in such a year. In early life, he was blessed with pious parents, who trained him carefully, and did their utmost to check the evil tempers which' &c. Now, this is plain and straightforward, if it is nothing else, and we respect the honesty, if we cannot admire the originality, of the dictio[n]. But, in this refined age of ours, if a little boy behaves very well, and dies very young, we find him shooting out into public life shortly afterwards as 'A Broken Lily,' a 'Gathered Flower,' 'An Early Blossom,' a 'Faded Rose,' or some other horticultural specimen. A young lady of amiable manners and prepossessing personal appearance falls into a decline, dies, and is buried. Write a memoir of her—for every one has memoirs now a days—and call it what it really is, 'The Life of Miss So-and-so,' just that, and nothing more, and you may safely consign it to a twelvemonth's sleep on the publisher's shelves, with a further siesta in his waste-paper basket. But call botany to your aid; introduce your book to public attention as 'The Bud of Promise; being a Brief Sketch,' 'The Damask Rosebud; a Short Account,' and it goes off like magic. Mammas buy it for their daughters; it is read at sewing-meetings and working-parties; young ladies run after it as being such a sweet pretty thing, so very touching; and a fresh edition is called for in three months. In the literary world, botany and biography go hand in hand.

Lately, these symbolic phraseologists, not content with bartering the vegetable kingdom for their use, have laid violent hands on the Bible itself, and appropriated for trade purposes those grand and time-honoured expressions which right-minded men are wont to utter with bowed heads and reverent hearts. The twenty-third Psalm has been hashed into fragments, and doled out piecemeal for title-pages. We have 'Green Pastures,' in fancy cloth, and 'Still Waters,' with gilt edges, sixpence each, or the two together for tenpence: 'The Valley of the Shadow of Death, Devout Musings for a Soul in Affliction,' price two shillings—bazaars supplied at cost price: 'A Table in the Wilderness, or Crumbs of Comfort for Hungry Disciples.' Why don't they publish a bread-loaf at once, and have done with it? 'The Paths of Righteousness, a Series of Hints to the Young,' price three-and-sixpence: 'Anointing Oil,' price two-and-sixpence a-bottle, we were going to say, but find from the advertisement it is sold in packets, containing half-a-dozen copies each: 'The Overflowing Cup,' two-pence, gilt edges: 'Goodness and Mercy, a Series of Anecdotes,' &c. We are very patient; we can bear a great deal; we can give up all herbs whatsoever, from the hyssop that springeth out of the wall to the cedar in Lebanon, for the use of literary symbolists, but let them not touch the Book itself. Let us hold intact, in their original grandeur and sanctity, the words which have kept alive the faith and hope of centuries, and not cut up our Bibles for title-pages. It is thus that the Truth is wounded in the house of her friends, and the religion we would fain honour and reverence hidden from our eyes by a flimsy sentimentalism. Better the quaint wordy conceits of a hundred years ago, than this irreverent meddling with things sacred. If by using the language of Scripture for introducing their works to the public, authors and publishers are not 'handling the word of God deceitfully,' we know not what that expression means.

At the present time, utilitarian title-pages appear to be coming into fashion. The 'Family Bread-basket' is now advertised as a monthly publication, containing miscellaneous articles of instruction and amusement suitable for all classes. This has a comfortable sound, and suggests a pleasing contrast to the 'Crumbs,' 'Scraps,' and 'Fragments' with which some authors mock our hunger. The 'Bread-basket' has our best wishes, provided the pabulum it offers to us is home-baked, raised with honest brewer's yeast, and guiltless of lime, bones, or alum. Knowing the character of the metropolis, we should be more satisfied if London 'contributions' were rejected, and the contents supplied from the country. As the 'Bread-basket' is intended to meet the wants of young people, and we have not yet outgrown our own juvenile tastes, may we suggest a little confectionary, in the shape of biscuits, seed-cake, &c., introduced in judicious portions, by way of helping down the more solid food. Lastly, if the editor has any connection with Scotland, he will pardon us for reminding him that the best—incomparably the best of all bread—is *short-bread*. Let this hint suffice.

An infant magazine usually slips off its long clothes—that is, monthly wrappers—and assumes a change of dress on the first anniversary of its birthday. We hope, at the expiration of a twelvemonth, to see the announcement that "covers for the 'Bread-basket'" are now ready, and may be had at all booksellers'. Would not crochet covers be appropriate, or diaper neatly braided? If the young lady is still in existence who, being interrogated as to the nature of a piece of fancy-work on which she was engaged, replied that it was an anti-macassar for a bread-basket, we have no doubt she will be quite willing to provide a supply.

These matter-of-fact title-pages having once come into vogue, we may expect, in the course of a few months, to hail the advent of 'The Family Meal-tub,' 'The Household Flour-bin,' 'The Domestic Rag-bag,' and 'The Waste-paper Basket.' To this last-mentioned periodical, whenever it emerges into public life, we guarantee a liberal allowance of contributions. By and by, the title-pages of books will be more amusing than their contents, and those who are in search of a little harmless recreation will find it nowhere more daintily supplied than in the baptismal registers of Paternoster Row.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

WHAT with fearful iteration of fires and other lamentable catastrophes by land and water, there has been no lack of things to talk about during the recess; and this remarkable crowd of accidents has set some of our moral philosophers and students of social phenomena seriously a-thinking. Is there a law at the basis of social as there is of physical phenomena? Some hold that there is, and they find an analogy between the unusual number of casualties and our street-traffic. For instance, a person is frequently prevented crossing a street when he wishes to do so, by a great assemblage of passing vehicles, which seems as if it might continue for hours; but in a few minutes the crush lessens, and but a few scattered vehicles occupy the recently crowded thoroughfare, and during this lull the crossing must be effected; for ere long there will be another crush, as any one may see for himself who will watch the traffic in the streets of London: it is a succession of waves, now increasing, now diminishing at irregular intervals, all day long. And the same prevails, so say the students, in other social phenomena.

The opportunity has been seized by many to put forward remedies or means of prevention. One ingenious individual recommends the mixing of soluble glass with the water to be pumped on a fire, as an effectual means of extinction; another would

use dilute alumina, that is, clay and water; and another argues that phosphorus is a capital thing for putting out a fire, because it develops so much phosphoric acid, in which nothing will burn. Unluckily for the latter proposition, experiment demonstrates that before the acid can exert its protective influence, the phosphorus quickens the conflagration, and leaves nothing to be protected.

How to prevent railway accidents, is still a question hard to be answered. We have been informed by one of the government railway inspectors, that the risks of railway travelling are always much greater than the public have any conception of; that there is more of what may be described as 'touch and go,' in the ordinary traffic, than the numerous class of optimists would be disposed to admit. This fact renders it the more essential to discover and apply a means of safety; and there is no doubt that as preliminaries to this discovery, it would be well to take immediate measures for the constant supervision of a train while in motion, and for communication between guard and engine-driver. To insist on this would be a better popular cry than that about underpaid or overworked servants. Public sympathy is too apt to forget that there is something to be said on the other side of the question; and that public impatience is oftentimes to blame. As a further means of prevention, we would insist strongly on punctuality in the service of a line of railway, and with the greater earnestness, because it is easier to be punctual than unpunctual, and because, judging from our own experience within the past two months, unpunctuality appears to have become the rule on most of the English railways.

The suggestion that risk may be lessened by diminishing the amount of passengers, is worth consideration. If excursionists could travel very cheaply by any train, there would be but little need to disturb the regular railway service. If it be profitable to carry a thousand passengers one hundred miles by one train at half-a-crown each, would it not be equally profitable to carry them by fifties or hundreds in the regular trains throughout the day, and with advantage to the public by affording them a choice of hours at which to start? Statistics appear to lend weight to this suggestion: in 1860, the total receipts on the railways of the United Kingdom amounted to £27,766,622, of which more than £11,000,000 was taken from passengers. The whole number of passengers in the same year was 163,435,678, comprehending, in round numbers, 93,000,000 third class, 49,000,000 second class, 20,000,000 first class; and the greatest part of the £11,000,000 was made up by third-class passengers. The number of miles of railway open at the end of 1860 was 10,433; and the increase in the number of passengers over 1859 was 13,500,000.

As was expected, the abolition of the paper-duty has occasioned a burst of activity in many things that occupy themselves with paper. To say nothing of the cheapening of popular literature, we have reason to believe that paper will henceforth be employed in the arts to such a varied extent as might at present seem almost impossible. Even with the burden of a duty, we have seen wonderful things accomplished with different forms of paper for useful and decorative purposes; and when men can buy collars at four shillings a gross, and women can purchase collars stamped out of paper at sevenpence each, which at a few feet distance can hardly be distinguished from the choicest lace, what may we not expect now that invention and ingenuity are to have unfettered play on the raw material? There will be gain to science and art, and, not least, to the beauty and comfort of many a home.

With so many disasters in mind, it is a relief to hear of the success of that tremendous new iron warship, the *Warrior*; to say that her first voyage from the Thames to Portsmouth exceeded all expectation,

is no figure of speech. The result is one that makes us aware of the astonishing progress of the mechanical arts; for a few years ago most persons would have thought it as likely that the Sebastopol forts would be sent to sea, as steam-ships built of six-inch iron. The completion of the breakwater at Portland happens just in time to form a sufficiently spacious harbour for all the ships we are likely to build. This mighty barrier is now more than a mile and a half in length, rising at its outermost extremity from a depth of eleven fathoms, and has required for its construction about 6,000,000 tons of stone. It will be effectually protected by the massive fortifications which are now building on the Verne, the highest part of the isle, and which, isolated by a ditch 80 feet deep and 100 feet wide, are said to excel all the defensive works hitherto built in this country.

Other results apart, the meeting of the British Association at Manchester was remarkable for a couple of lectures—one by Mr Airy, the Astronomer-royal, on the solar eclipse of July 1860; the other by Professor Miller on chemical analysis by means of the spectrum. Those who wish to be informed as to the present state of astronomical science in the particular of eclipses, and its bearing on our knowledge of cosmical phenomena, or to know the history and significance of spectrum analysis, would do well to read the lectures, which have been widely published by contemporary journals. An important connection will be perceived between chemistry and astronomy, for while one notes the appearances of the sun and its atmosphere, the other analyses that atmosphere by means of its spectrum; and the photographer with his chemical appliances gives us pictorial representations of all that has taken place.

Apropos of photography, we hear that Niépce St Victor has made another advance towards taking pictures—of landscapes, for instance—in their natural colours. Though his results are yet far from perfect, he still hopes for eventual success. Another Frenchman has succeeded in taking two photographic views of the vast panorama beheld from the summit of Mont Blanc. Another, whose experiments in the phonographing of sound we mentioned some time ago, is improving his apparatus, and feels pretty confident of being able to make a speech record itself by means of his phonautoscope. In this instrument, a light style is set in motion by the sound of the voice, and traces lines on a strip of prepared paper which is kept slowly moving by wheel-work.

In a paper laid before the Academy of Sciences at Paris, M. Faye develops a theory which accounts for the motion of comets and for certain phenomena that take place in the movements of planetary satellites, by supposing the existence of a repulsive force, which force is due to the incandescence of the sun. Astronomers will doubtless have something to say on a theory which so directly opposes the theory of attraction, and, so far as comets are concerned, the theory of a resisting medium; and those who are interested in the question may anticipate much learned discussion thereupon. Professor William Thomson, whose theory of solar heat we noticed some time ago, took up another view of the subject at the Manchester meeting, and read a paper, entitled 'Physical Considerations regarding the Possible Age of the Sun's Heat.'

We remind our readers that the electric light is still kept burning nightly at the Dungeness light-house, by way of introduction to the fact, that under the sanction of the Trinity Board, the lime-light is on trial at the South Foreland upper light-house, and as yet with highly satisfactory results. This is a more powerful light than the electric; indeed, the most powerful hitherto discovered. In the experiments made some years ago, it was found to be visible to an observer standing on a height at a distance of ninety

miles; but owing to want of volume and of continuity, it did not appear likely to become of practical value. In the present instance, this objection has been overcome; the light is as large and as much under control as can be desired, and only requires a modification of the reflecting apparatus to bring its full power into use. As may be supposed, the reflectors that suit oil-lamps will require some change to fit them for the intense light of lime. The apparatus by which the two gases are made to unite their stream and commix in a chamber before flowing upon the ball of lime, is ingenious, and what is of great importance, secure. Risk of explosion would be a fatal objection to its use. This is not the first time that the lime-light has been practically employed: it was tried for two months without a failure at the building of Westminster Bridge, and for some time on the Landing Stage at Liverpool. It would be something to be proud of to know that this piercing light was sending its rays far across the deep from every English light-house. In leaving this subject for the present, we may mention that an experimentalist at Paris has demonstrated that plants will turn green as well under the influence of electric light as under sunlight.

Many years ago, some enterprising individual, whose name we forget, proposed the making of gas in the mining districts where coal is cheapest and most abundant, whence it was to be distributed in pipes to all parts of the kingdom. It would be an excellent thing could we get rid of all the gas-works south of the Humber, and yet keep our lamps alight: but nothing came of the proposal. Mr Leslie now brings it forward in another shape. Instead of converting the coal into gas, he would distil it at a low temperature, and condense the vapour given off into oil. This oil would be as capable of transport as any other liquid, and placed in proper vessels, might be delivered wherever wanted, whereby all the cost of 300 miles of pipes from Northumberland to Middlesex would be saved. With a supply of this oil and a small retort, any person might manufacture his own gas—a fact which would perhaps be beneficially appreciated by the occupants of country-houses far from gas-works. It should be understood that this gas would be pure, because it is much easier to purify the oil than it is to purify gas made in the usual way.

Dr Tyndall has returned from another scientific Alpine excursion, during which he climbed to the summit of the Weisshorn: the first ascent of that frozen peak.—The expedition sent from Melbourne to explore the interior of Australia, under the command of Mr Burke, has, in part, and, it may be, entirely failed. A mistake appears to have been made at the outset, for instead of sailing up the coast to the nearest starting-point, the whole journey was by land; hence, when the party arrived on new ground, they were already exhausted.—From Africa we have news of acquisition of territory: Lagos, a place on the west coast, well known to slave-merchants, has been ceded by its king to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. We think it likely that our Liverpool merchants will make greater profits out of the palm-oil, timber, and cotton to be thence imported, than the slavers did out of their human cargoes, enormous though they were.

A new system of lighting the stage of a theatre has been introduced in the Imperial Opera-house at Paris, which supersedes the present objectionable arrangement of the foot-lights. These lights, as is well known, fatigue the eyes of some actors painfully, set fire to dresses of incautious actresses, at times with fatal result, and produce heated currents of air in quick motion between singers and the audience. In the new method, the burners are kept below the floor, the products of combustion are carried off by two tubes, and the light is thrown upon the scene by a double reflector, and is at the same time so screened

by a plate of unpolished glass as to save the actors' eyes from annoyance. This method of lighting may perhaps be found applicable to other places as well as theatres; and seeing that, in addition to the advantages above named, it prevents the diffusion of noxious vapours in the atmosphere, it has claims to consideration on the score of health.—Some learned doctors think that part of the ill health of London, manifesting itself in unusual forms, is attributable to the saturation of the soil by leakage of gas from the pipes. The amount of leakage is estimated at one-tenth of the whole quantity of gas consumed by the great city; and as London burns 630,000,000 feet of gas in a year, the quantity in the soil and exhaling therefrom must indeed be great. Thousands of Londoners know full well that it is impossible to dig in the streets without releasing an overpowering smell of gas.—At the beginning of the present year, the gas-burners in Paris, numbering 18,463, were all changed from the narrow-slit to the broad-slit burner, invented by M. Dumas; and the result is a threefold greater amount of light, without any increased consumption of coal.—A new kind of gas has been exhibited before the Société d'Encouragement by Mr Chandor, of New York, derived from naphtha, turpentine, and vegetable tar, treated in a peculiar manner. The gas, when prepared, is placed in a generator, where it vaporises readily, without throwing off any bad smell, and is transmissible from thence by india-rubber tubes in any required direction. The light emitted is described as excellent, provided the burner be suitable: the best as yet tried is the butterfly-wing burner used in New York. In addition to giving light, we are told that this new gas will heat rooms, and drive machines, as is to be shewn by its impelling a small steamer on the Seine; and those who hold that locomotives can be worked by gas as well as by steam, will now perhaps have an opportunity of testing their theory.

We have more than once called attention to Signor Bonelli's telegraphic researches, the results of which have been practically applied in Sardinia. He has now invented a new system, which, as we hear, prints the messages sent in legible characters, and with such economy that their cost will be not more than six-pence. A company, it is said, are about to introduce this new system between Liverpool and Manchester, so that we shall ere long have news of its merits. The Americans have been the first to demonstrate the possibility of telegraphing between a balloon and the earth, by the flashing of a message down to the President from the aéronaut-general, who had gone up to take a bird's-eye view of the enemy's camps and proceedings in the neighbourhood of Washington.

The production of an economical electric light is still an object of anxious quest with a number of experimentalists, whose fortune would be made if they could only shew a uniformly steady light at moderate cost. An approach towards a solution of the question is shewn by Mr Way's electric lamp, which was exhibited at scientific soirées in London during the past season. In this the carbons are replaced by a thread of mercury. The light produced is so intense, that a purple solution exposed to it appears perfectly white; tested by the spectrum, it shews a distinct ray beyond those commonly visible; which ray we should see in ordinary circumstances, were our eyes formed so as to be susceptible to its undulations. Others are in eager search of an electromotor, but are as yet baffled by the fact, that increase in the size of the magnets employed does not increase the power of the engine. The larger the boiler of a steam-engine, the greater will be the working capability; but bigger magnets will not increase the stroke of an electric engine. Practically, a number of small magnets are found to increase the working-power; but the advantage is apparent only, inasmuch as the increased consumption of zinc at the batteries raises the cost far

beyond that of coal for a steam-engine. A small model of an electromotor may be constructed which satisfies all the conditions; but should the sanguine experimenter enlarge the dimensions, in hopes to increase the power, he finds the principal result to be an increase in the magnitude of the spark at the commutator, becoming at last sufficiently intense to burn all portions of the apparatus within its influence.

An inventor in New Jersey has effected an improvement in the reefing of sails. The lower part of the sail is fitted with what seamen call a 'bonnet,' and can be furled independently of the upper part. We are told, that 'this improvement applied to the topsails of large ships accomplishes everything that is effected by the use of double topsails, while dispensing with the weight of the two extra yards required with such a rig.'

THE GRAVE ON THE HILL

Deep in a silent wilderness,
Under the southern sky,
Far distant from his native isle,
A white man's ashes lie.

A broken, rough-hewn tombstone marks
The grave—dug long ago,—
In shadow of a mighty rock—
On a hill broad and low.

The grass is short, and scorched, and brown,
On that forsaken tomb,
And there no blossoms ever spring,
To grace it with their bloom.

The daisy, from far England's soil ;
The primrose, pale and sweet ;
The violet, dearest gem of all—
None such the eye may greet.

These are for grassy churchyard mounds,
Where Love's wild tears are shed,
And Love's eyes watch, and Love's hands tend
The dwelling of the dead.

Only the thin, parched, summer grass,
And dark-green thistles wave,
Where lies, beneath the hill-side rock,
The exile's lonely grave ;

For, when Death's awful presence cast
A sacred terror here,
Love's hand, and eye, and heart were far
From the rude, hasty bier.

And since the storms of thirty years
Have swept above the spot;
The sun has glowed, the chill rain poured,
But Love has known it not.

And yet, it may be, far away
Still beats some faithful heart,
For which that wild, neglected grave
Holds life's most sacred part.

Love, that has never failed or died,
Unspent, may linger still
In some true breast—and all for him
Whose grave is on the hill.

Tasmania.

A. D.